585 782 769 performs the religious rite (hahla). He takes between his first finger and thumb a small quantity of the half digested grass which has been taken from the paunch of the animal, makes a little ball of it, touches his tongue with it and emits a sound resembling " tsu "... as if he were slightly spitting. This is the customary sacramental act in most of the sacrifices. (See Part VI.) He stands behind the wedding pair and, looking straight in front of him towards them, speaks to the gods, that is to say to the spirits of his ancestors, and says : " My fathers, my grandfathers (he calls them by their names) look! To-day my child is leaving me. She enters the wedded life (bukatin). Look at her, accompany her where she will live. May she also found a village, may she have many children (mu nyikan timbeleko), may she be happy, good and just. May she be on good terms with those with whom she will be ". Here it may happen that a brother of the bridegroom will interrupt and say : " Yes, we will live peacefully with her if she does her duty well and does not worry her husband ". The old man goes on with his patriarchal prayer without taking any notice of the interruption and everybody listens quietly and attentively. This prayer which he pronounces with his eyes wide open and in a most natural manner is sometimes very long. When the people have had enough of it and wish him to stop, they send a young man to cut a piece of meat and to put it into the old man's mouth. Thus they " cut " his prayer and he keeps still. The person officiating must be the first to partake of the meat of the sacrifice.

f) The symbolical belt.

585 777 825 The astragalus (nhlolo) of the right leg of the sacrificed goat has been carefully kept. All along the belly they cut a strip of skin reaching as far as the neck and up to the chin, which is cut so as to form a kind of pocket at the end of the strip. The astragalus is put into this pocket and the father ties the belt around the waist of the young woman. He must not look at her face to face in doing this. On the contrary, she must turn her

585 777 825

back to him. This is doubtless done to wish her good luck and so that she may have many descendants. Natives have a special veneration for the astragalus bone which is also used in the divinatory system.

5) The tlhoma, departure of the bride for the conjugal dwelling.

585 If the lobolo business has been duly concluded, the bride will start on the following day for the conjugal dwelling, accompanied by her friends. (1) The next day, she will be joined by the women of her village, who will help her to erect the wood pile (ku koroka shigiyane). They will all go together into the bush to cut a large quantity of branches, and will pile them up between two poles covered with ochre in the bride's village. Each of the husband's relations will take one of these logs during the following months. It is, it seems, a symbolic present from one family to the other.

As for the wood cutters, they take their leave and go home. But what a surprise! Here is the bride going with them! Her sisters are taking her home again! The husband entreats, but in vain! He pursues the woman who, two days before, became his legal wife. To no purpose! He offers her a present to induce her to stay with him. She refuses... This was foreseen ; she must go to her mother to fetch her basket (shihundju), her mat, her spoon and other utensils which make up her small trousseau. A last lesson must also be given to the husband : " If we have given you our daughter, do not believe that we have had enough of her! (hi kolile). She is very precious to us and we take her back! "

Patience! To morrow she will come back accompanied by one young girl only who helps to carry her furniture. This

(1) It is *taboo* for the bride's parents to keep their daughter in their village when the lobolo has been entirely delivered ; because, should the bride die with them, they would have to return all the cattle, whilst if she dies in the husband's village, the consequences will not be so dreadful (See Part I. Ch. II. C.).

606 these bukoñwana rules would cause death. Yet they are religiously kept as necessary to ensure normal relations between the two families.

We have already seen the taboos which must be observed during the betrothal period (p. 106). Later on, during the gatherings which take place *before marriage*, other taboos are imposed.

606 802 201 584 784 1. In the discussion concerning the lobola, when oxen are counted, the bridegroom's parents must never offer eight head of cattle, because one of them will be killed for the feast, and so eight means only seven. *Seven* is counted by raising, one after the other, the five fingers of the left hand and the thumb and index-finger of the right. In raising the index-finger, they might point it at the bakoñwana, and this would be a mortal offence. To point at anyone with the index-finger is as bad as bewitching him. It is done only in anger, and all the preceding discussions might be nullified if such an imprudence were committed.

2. Should one of the oxen be frightened by the shouts of joy with which the arrival of the herd is greeted and by the sham-fight of the lobola day, and run away home, it is taboo. The ox has seen that something is wrong and has consequently fled. Even should they succeed in bringing it back, "timpfalo ti tjukile," the conscience (or the diaphragm) has been stirred!

584 825 777 784 3. If one of the oxen has no horns (homu ya mhulu), or only abortive horns, psa yila : *bukoñwana byi ta pfumala timpsalu*, viz., the relations with relatives-in-law will have no tenderness, because such an ox moves its head to and fro as it wanders in the night ; it is abnormal. The bride's family will not accept it.

4. Should the lobolo consist of hoes, and should the rain fall on them while they are being carried to the bakoñwana, it is taboo. The lobolo must not be brought in a wet condition, otherwise the new relations will be spoilt (bukoñwana byi ta tshipa) ; the young people will not be able to marry.

5. Do not bring with you tobacco in the leaf when going *bukwen* as a fiancé, bring only ground tobacco, or misfortune will happen. Later on, when you have married your wife, it is allowable.

6. Never eat zebra or reedbuck's meat when staying with your parents-in-law. Should they kill one of these animals while

584 you are there, or on the road, have nothing to do with it. The
825 zebra is *mbalamberi*, an animal of two colours; moreover it has no
777 horns. The same holds good for the giraffe. It has two colours,
784 it has too long bowels. Psa yila! The reedbuck cries: "Dzoo." It is a witch: a mukoñwana must not eat it. For the same reason a sheep without horns is never given to bakoñwana.

7. When you go with women to the parents of your fiancée for a *shirwalo*, viz., to bring them beer, should one of the jugs fall to the ground, psa yila! Return home!

606 8. From a Thonga of the Maputju country I once heard that it
609 was a great taboo in that district for a man to drink milk with
784 his parents-in-law; let us say rather to *eat* milk, as Natives
618 always take it in its solid form, i. e. curdled. This man was a
825 Christian; he had given up many heathen customs and had gone
177 so far as to partake of milk with his mother-in-law, but, the people all round were very much shocked at his conduct. Pushing my inquiry further, I heard that the milk taboo was observed not only with bakoñwana, but with all the inhabitants of the country who did not belong to one's clan: curdled milk was to be eaten only with people bearing the same family name. In other words, it is forbidden to eat milk *in any village where one can take a wife*. In a very interesting paper published in the *South African Journal of Science*, 1925, p. 481, Mrs A. W. Hoernlé says that this custom is wide-spread amongst many Bantu tribes of Central and South Africa, and explains it by the very intimate relationship which is thought to exist between human beings and cattle. The oxen are one with the clan to which they belong, and only members of that clan can partake of the milk of their cows. I never met with this idea in the other parts of the Thonga tribe, and I may remark that, as the Maputju clan is settled very near to the Zulus and has been more or less "zuluised", this custom might very well have been borrowed from its neighbours. Further researches will show whether the other Thonga clans have preserved what seems to be a very old Bantu idea, or at any rate traces of it. This is quite possible.

584 9. Do not build a hut for your wife before you have married
777 her. Mankhelu says: "Even if you have plenty of money
784 to lobola, if you make such a blunder your wife will be taken from you.

777 from you... In the same manner, do not prepare the skin for
784 the child before it is born. Your wife would not bring forth a human being. Should you transgress this rule, you would bring misfortune on yourself (wa tihlolela, wa singita), and on your family. If you go to Moneri (the missionary) and ask him for a skin for this purpose before the birth of your child, he will tell you it is so." Note the deep-rooted conviction of the old heathen, who appeals to the authority of the missionary to strengthen the taboo!

585 10. Later on, when you are married, you must avoid eating
784 honey with your wife for a whole year, till she has had a child.
777 The bride is allowed to eat honey at her parent's home, but not in
262 her new domicile and with her husband. The husband can eat it in the bush, but he must wash his hands when he comes back, lest his wife should notice it. She would run home if she knew of it. We have already met with this prohibition in the tjekela visit, and heard the reason for it : honey flows ; the bride would go! The explanation now given is this : honey is too sweet, and your bride is too sweet also. (Is it not your honey-moon or honey-year ?) The two things do not go together. (Psa yalana, they hate each other.) A third reason is this : Bees, when they have eaten their honey, fly away from the hive. So would your wife do... After a year this misfortune is no longer to be feared.

606 This last idea is very curious. It shows that the bukoñwana
581 taboos *decrease in severity as time passes*. The strained relations between the son-in-law and his wife's mother also become easier. He begins to call her mamana, and she calls him ñwana. This transformation even goes so far that in some cases a mukoñwana can go and dwell in his parents-in-law's village, especially if he has children and if the children are grown up. And this fact gives us the natural explanation of these curious rules.

Marriage, as we have seen, is not an individual affair in the collective stage of family life. It is a contract made between two groups, which enter by it into a special relation towards each other. This relation is fraught with danger, because the interests of both groups are involved ; a bride and bridegroom are inspired with a mutual feeling of fear, knowing that an

484 comes to ask for his property! What cunning displayed in confusing the real issue and evading payment! (1)

Travelling consequently plays a great part in the life of these tribes, and it is no wonder that it is subject to many rules and that many taboos must be observed on the road in order to succeed in these expeditions.

I may mention first the four following taboos.

484 A traveller must not *take salt* with him when he goes either to 777 pay a visit, or to hunt, or on a business trip, or else he will not succeed in his object ; he must avoid *sharpening assagais* on the 784 road ; this would rouse his enemies and "awaken thorns" on the path ; he must take care *not to pluck milala leaves*, those used for weaving baskets : it would be an insult to the people on whom he is calling. Let him cut these leaves when returning, or else he will find trouble in the village to which he goes, lamentations, shoutings, disgusting sights. When he finds on the road people occupied in *digging a grave*, he must go at once and help them for a while. If he neglects this duty, he will take upon himself the misfortune (titekela khombo). He will not succeed in his purpose. Should he be in the village when some person dies, he must take part in the purification of the inmates.

825 There are some kinds of animals which bring bad luck to the 777 traveller. In order to "keep the road clean" (basisa ndlela), he 484 must beware of the *mampfana bird*, a kind of crane called "the preventer of the journey" (sibaliyendjo (Ro) shitsinyariendjo (Dj). Should this bird fly across the road, with wide-spread wings, it would be enough to make the party return home : there is danger of death before them and the "mampfana" comes to warn them

609 (1) One day one of my neighbours, named Maadjia, was arranging to start for 484 Bilene to "follow his goods" (landja bukosi) ; he came and requested me to give him a letter. "What for? Your debtors do not know how to read and I do not know anything about your affairs." — "It does not matter," said he. "The important point is that I should have a paper in my hand. They will be afraid. They will think that I come from the White people with their authority." I did not like to refuse a small favour to a neighbour ; on the other hand I was somwhat reluctant to help him in a none too moral plan, so I gave him a letter addressed to the Portuguese Intendant of these countries in which I stated that I knew him. It was a kind of pass... What use did he make of it? The fact remains that he came back with his oxen, and I believe the sight of the mysterious paper was not without influence in the transactions which ended in the recovery of his property!

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

825 777 484 782 that the road is not "clean" (Viguet). The flesh of this bird is used in the preparation of the charms carried by travellers. There are also two mammals which give the same warning : the duyker antelope (mhunti) and the polecat (mangobo). Should a boy going to Johannesburg meet with any of these three animals, he will go to his kokwana (grandfather) and ask him for help ; the old man will then take a mouthful of beer or water and project it towards the traveller (to make "phaa") with the following prayer addressed to the ancestor-gods : "You, so and so, look to this child who wants to travel! Bless him in his journey! May the Spirit of the bush (Shikwembo sha nhoba) remain asleep."

517 461 The *discussion of affairs* (ku khanela timhaka) on the square of the village also fills many an hour in a man's life.

On the whole, men have but little to do. We can fairly estimate at three months the time required for the work which they have to do for the village and for the community. The remaining months are devoted to pastimes and pleasure (1).

III. *Games of adults.*

000 Having already described boys' and girls' games (p. 66 and 172), I now proceed to those of the adults, as forming an important part of the Life of the Village.

462 (1) Much has been said and written about the division of village work between men and women in the Bantu kraal. I shall try to show in the Practical Conclusions, No. V that civilisation is bound to produce great changes in this region. But, as already pointed out, it is certain that to the Natives themselves their system appears perfectly natural and that the women do not at all complain of their fate. The following charming story which is told by a Moravian missionary, The Rev. Th. Bachmann, who lived for a long time amongst the Wa-Nika, between Lake Tanganyika and Nyasa gives fresh proof of this assertion :

000 One day, as the rain was pouring down, I saw Walusangano returning from his garden with his wife, Leya. The wife was walking in front with a big bundle of wood on her head. On the wood was a basket containing maize, cucumbers and beans, as well as the hoe. On her back Leya was carrying her youngest child. The other children followed and the father brought up the rear-guard, carrying only an open umbrella. We were greatly shocked at this sight, and I thought it my duty to intervene on behalf of the women. On Sunday night, at public worship, I spoke of what I had seen in the most expressive terms possible. But my speech did not make the impression I expected. The men looked very much embarrassed ; the women indignant.

The following week, at sunset, I was under my veranda, watching the lightning and

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE CHIEF.

A. BIRTH AND YOUTH.

(Information received from Tobane, and applying specially to Ronga clans).

643/824 When the principal wife of a reigning chief, she who is called "the wife of the country" (nsati wa tiko), perceives that she will in due course present her lord with an heir, she is sent away from the capital into one of the provinces, under pretext of illness. It must not be whispered abroad that she is pregnant, for, from this moment, every precaution must be taken to hide the future chief. Thus, should the event occur in the country of Mpfumo, the expectant mother might be sent into the province of Phulane.

The infant comes into the world ; should it prove to be a boy, the fact is kept a secret. Only the most renowned doctors of the country, those attached to the royal family, those who are "the strength of the land" (le ti yimisaka tiko), are assembled to watch the birth ; they prepare, with special care, the *milombyana* (p. 48). When the queen goes out carrying her child on her back, she covers it with a piece of cloth to prevent anyone seeing whether it is a boy or a girl! She even dresses it in girl's clothing, because it is dangerous (psa henyanya), it is taboo to say in a loud voice : "This child will be a chief." Such an imprudent declaration would bring him bad luck (singita), just in the same way as would male clothing. (Mankhelu.)

643/777

The royal offspring grows, unrecognised, and is weaned in the same way as other children. The mother returns to the capital, the child remaining in the village where it was born.

643 857 However, specially appointed persons watch over him and report of his well being to his father. His youthful playmates are taught to respect him ; he is surrounded in his games by a miniature court, from which he chooses his favourites (tinxekwa) : some of his companions act as counsellors and reprimand those who do not treat him with due respect. They play at court... also at soldiers ; the juvenile troop wage war with the wasps, and also with the boys of the adjoining villages.

643 781 777 751 782 When the child reaches boyhood, the bones are consulted, and sacrifices offered in order to ascertain from the gods whether it be well to take him to the capital. Should the answer be in the negative, there is nothing to do but wait. When the dice declare the propitious moment to have arrived, the transfer is effected and the boy taken to his father. This is a great occasion for the counsellors who have watched over the boy and who thenceforward supervise his education. They feast themselves well (ba fumisana), kill goats, perhaps even an ox, and offer a sacrifice to proclaim to the gods the return to the capital of the heir to the throne ; to his ankle is tied the astragalus of a slaughtered goat, as a protective amulet.

643 881 836 At puberty the boy undergoes, in the same manner as his companions, all the ceremonial rites usual at that period. The principal doctors of the country treat him, in order that henceforth he may be a man (ba mu yimisa a ba wanuna), having full right to enter into the sexual relations of gangisa (p. 97). Care is taken, however, to attach to his person comrades of riper age, who will prevent him giving way to excesses, (suka banhwanyana la' bakulu ba ta mu gema, ba mu sibela ku kula), which would arrest his growth and render him small and feeble. He thus lives in relative continence, participating in the play and in the work of boys of his own age, and looking after the herds. At times he gives a feast, when his father happens to have presented him with an ox with which to make merry.

643 588 595 Now we see him arrived at manhood, at the age when the Blacks take a wife. If his father is still living, the young man is not allowed to marry officially. He may certainly lobola, viz., contract regular marriage in the usual way, and possibly

726 As regards the *order of the march*, the battalions of the young
701 men, stationed on either side of the entrance, go first; they
643 form the advanced guard, the post of greatest danger. The scouts, tinhlori (Dj.) tinhloli (Ro.), go in front; each company has its leader to whom these scouts bring reports. It is the duty of the young men to surround the position to be carried and to make the assault. The two sides of the circle then follow, and lastly the chest of the army, forming the rear guard. The chief thus brings up the rear, protected by the battalions of veterans. But generally the chief does not go to battle; he remains at home.

726 During the campaign, *the whole clan is subjected to many taboos.*
784 Those who remain at home must *keep quiet* (rula). No noise
777 must be heard in the villages. The women must not close the
722 doors of the huts. It is taboo: their husbands might meet with "bitterness" (shibiti). They might lack strength to run away. Fire must be lit in the huts in the evening, in order that the warriors may "have light" where they are. It is taboo to omit this precaution. Work in the fields must be more or less suspended; women may attend to it in the morning only, before the heat of the day, while the air is still fresh. "Then, if a warrior has stepped on a thorn, the thorn will be cool (titimeta); if he has knocked against a stump, the stump will be quiet and not hurt him. (Mboza.)" Old men who remain at home must keep watch, and
765 if they see a messenger coming, they follow him to the chief.
726 Should he bring bad news, they do not inform the women, as it is
834 taboo to mourn over warriors killed in war before the return of the
777 army. A fine is imposed upon those who contravene this law.
784 It is taboo also to have sexual relations as long as the army is on the war-path. This would cause thorns to hurt the warriors and they would be defeated. (Mankhelu.)

722 According to Mankhelu, the mukhumbi may be again formed after arriving in the proximity of the hostile army. The
643 battalions will be sent one after the other by the great ndjuna who
726 will watch the progress of the fight. If he sees his men giving way, he "pours" (tshelela) new companies to help those who are fighting until they rush the position (gwabula) and put the enemy to flight. Then the pursuit begins. The dust flies up

539 791 825 days he did not see it, but one day, at sunset, he took his canoe and went on to the river. He took a red piece of cotton ; this was reflected at the bottom of the river. The hippopotamus saw it there and came up to see what was the matter. The hunter fired at it ; he fired a second time. And lo! there on its back was the one who rides upon it! One of the balls pierced him whilst the other pierced the hippopotamus. The animal rushed towards the hunter, but he fired a third time and killed it. Next morning they found the hippopotamus floating on the water, dead. In the village also a man had died during the night, and they were mourning there. The hunter had said to the people : 'I have killed a man who was on the hippopotamus.' And on one side of the river people were eating meat whilst on the other side people were crying. But they did not lodge a complaint against him ; no action can be taken in such a case."

224 777 As regards *the elephant (ndlopfu)* it was the favourite object of the chase, because killing one of these large beasts meant not only abundance of meat but also wealth on account of the ivory. Madyashikulu used to bring the tusks to Manukosi (Gungunyana's grandfather) who returned some of them to him, and with the money thus obtained the hunter could buy a wife. There are different systems of lurulula in the case of the elephant. The hunter takes a little of the tintebe powder (the charm of the slayers) pierces the eye of the beast, mixes the vitreum with the powder, adds drugs prepared from the end of the trunk and the tail and uses this mixture to overcome the nuru. A phisa of the Maputju country employed another method. He cut a piece of meat from the foreleg, cooked it, anointed it with powder from the calabash of the slayers, chewed it and began to blow it over the animal after having "climbed it." He then crept over the elephant in the same way as described above in the case of the hippopotamus, holding his gun in his hand the whole time. His comrades used to anoint him with a white medicine round both eyes. When he had returned home the treatment was continued by the administration of two vapour baths (mahungulo). He had to expose his body to the steam produced first by a decoction of various twigs, secondly by another decoction prepared from medicinal roots mixed with pieces of meat taken from a goat and from the elephant

itself. Afterwards he had to drink the broth and eat the meat. 224
The aim of the treatment was to enable him to kill more elephants. 777
In the case of the elephant as well as of the hippopotamus the chief 643
of the country has to perform the lurulula as well as the hunter "because he is the chief of all the animals of the country and he would be unable to govern it successfully if he did not do this."

The *rhinoceros (shibetshana)* is not common in Thongaland ; a 224
few of these animals are found in the extreme south of the Maputju 825
country. The same rules were observed when the hunters had succeeded in killing one ; but this is no easy task because, as Muvumbi said, the rhinoceros is terribly wild, as it has no "mapfalo." The mapfalo is a piece of cartilage which is found in all animals between the ribs, beneath the sternum ; it is the diaphragm ; it is also the seat of fear or of the conscience. It is this particular cartilage which throbs in the case of great fear. The rhinoceros has no mapfalo ; therefore it fears nothing and rushes savagely upon the hunter. Its meat is so delicious that when a man has tasted it he no longer wishes to drink water!

I never heard mention of the lurulula in connection with the 224
lion (*nghala* (Djo.), *ndjau* (Ro.). To avoid being mauled by lions 782
the hunters put into their mouths a little of every kind of food 825
mixed with their powerful drugs and spit it out to the four winds in order to appease the ancestor-gods of the country. Then if they meet with a lion, the wild beast, instead of rushing upon them, will look at them quietly, its saliva dropping from its mouth, and will do them no harm.

Strange to say the *buffalo* (nyari) has no nuru, and when I asked 825
why this was, my Maputju informant told me : "The buffalo is an ox." This answer may perhaps help us to understand something more about the nuru idea.

The statement regarding the *zebra* (mhangwa) is more curious still. "Mhangwa a yi lubiwi! Yi ni mabala ; i nala ; a yi ngeni hosin" viz. "No tax is paid for the zebra ; it is an animal with many colours (stripes) ; it is an enemy ; it must not enter the village of the chief." We have met with the same prohibition in connection with the village of the parents-in-law (I. p. 250).

As regards the *crocodile (ngwenya)* also called *shiwutlani-*

136 try to fly ; but they soon fall to the ground and you see them
222 running towards each other and shedding their slender transparent
262 wings, so that they remain on the spot, like worms, creeping slowly along, unable to defend themselves, an easy prey for the birds and the *shinana* toads, which have a grand feast on the happy day when winged termites appear! Those which happen to emerge where the hole has been dug, try to escape by flying, but are prevented from doing so by the covering of leaves. They at once fall heavily to the bottom and roll into the pot, which may become quite full in a few hours. The owner of the trap then comes and makes a splendid sauce with its contents! This kind of termite is not met with on the Coast.

I cannot enter into details as to all these more or less questionable foods. (See I, p. 65, the mention of the Shitambela beetle.)

262 Although the caterpillars, coleoptera, larvae, and locusts are universally appreciated, there are other "meats" which appeal to certain individuals or clans, but are disdainfully eschewed by others. For instance the boa is eaten with great gusto by the Rongas and disliked by the Nkunas. The same is true of the big varan lizard. The tortoise is generally eaten, but the Mpfumu boys, who esteem themselves more civilised, reject it. On inquiring why some persons or clans exclude certain kinds of meats which other persons or clans consider delectable, we find that there are two different reasons for this, between which it is important to differentiate. The exclusion is due either to a *nyenya*, viz., disgust, or to a *yila*, viz., a taboo.

1) Owing to *disgust*, some people refuse to eat *pork* : "their hearts fear it," probably because pigs are modern and some people are not yet accustomed to eat their flesh. Zulus reject every
262 kind of fish (nhlampfi) from the same feeling of disgust. Snails
777 are despised by all the Thongas ; it is true that the snail of the
825 country (Natica Wesseliana) is not very tempting, its shell being of a transparent green and its flesh reddish ; moreover it is said to "singita," viz., to bring bad luck to any one meeting with it on the way.

262 But the flesh of some other animals is abstained from, even
825 dreaded, because they *yila*, they are taboo. Thongas have no

C. UTENSILS.

Nature, which has provided the Ba-Ronga with skins of animals for clothing, and with poles, reeds, grasses and fibrous barks for their habitations, has also favoured them with several exceedingly useful trees of which they have not been slow to take advantage. Of these the most valuable is the *milala* palm, *(Hyphaene crinita)* used for nearly all basket-work; next comes the *nkuhlu (Trichilia emetica)* whose wood is particularly serviceable for all descriptions of carving. She has also deposited in their plains beds of clay, of more or less desirable quality, which they use for making pottery. I shall begin with the latter. 824

I. *Pottery.*

An excellent clay is to be found at Shibindji, in the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, a district close to Morakwen, and the people of this place — they are the same who abstain from eating any animal liver (I. p. 364) — are the potters who supply the whole country. They are said to be the masters (benyi) of the art. But clay is found in many other places, in Shifukundju, Mpatshiki, etc. It is said that the clay of Muweri, near Lemon Island, on the Lower Nkomati, is even better than that of Shibindji. So the art of the potter does not belong to a single family, and is not hereditary. Any one may learn it and practise it. Pottery amongst the Thongas is essentially woman's province. Is this because earthenware utensils are principally used in the kitchen, where woman's sway is paramount and indisputed? Possibly; in any case it is so. 134 323 323

Let us suppose then that the mother of a family wishes to renew, or to add to her stocks of pots, large and small. She starts out for the marshes, picks up in the well-known hollow several clods of clay and returns to the village carrying them on her head. No one salutes her: everyone pretends not to see her, 323 777

323 doubtless to avoid bringing any ill luck to the venture! She
177 buries the clay at the foot of a tree to keep it moist, and only takes it out of its hiding-place on the day on which she has decided to start the work.

323 Let us see by means of some photographs, taken by the greatly regretted A. Borel, how Meta, a Shibindji girl, married in Rikatla, proceeds in her work. Placing a broken piece of an old pot in the

Fashioning the pots. *Phot. A. Borel*

mortar, she pounds it until it is reduced to small fragments, the size of a grain of maize : these she mixes with her clay, adding water and sand, and kneads the whole together until she has made it into a very soft ball. She makes a hole in this, a wide opening which she enlarges by degrees, hollowing it out more and more and
323 gradually giving it the shape she wishes. I have already alluded
352 to the clever way in which the Blacks trace the circumference of a circle on the ground (I. p. 126) ; the same natural instinct enables them to model perfect spheres. It is astonishing to see the beautiful symmetry of these utensils, although these pots are fashioned without the aid of a wheel or measuring instrument of any kind.

painted a brilliant brown, which is done with a decoction of the bark of the mangrove (nkapa) and of the nkanye, boiled with a kind of creeper (mahlehlwa), which has a sticky sap. Such is the primitive method followed in the manufacture of all Native pottery. 323 386

The process of firing being often unsuccessful, taboos are plentiful in the manufacture. When women collect the clay, 323 777

The furnace ready. Phot. A. Borel.

only one of them digs and gives it to the others; should each make haste to dig for herself, this would bring mishap: the pots would break. If no accident happens and the firing is successful, these women will say: "She who dug the other day has a lucky hand (a ni boko dja hombe). Let her dig again another time." When the clay has been hidden in the ground, at the foot of a tree, it is also taboo to tread on the spot, when walking through the village. When the heap of wood is ready, the potteress will call a little child, an innocent creature, to set fire to the furnace. She shows it where to place the glowing ember,

323 and, if the result of the firing is good, she will always call the same
777 child on future occasions (1).

787 If all these precautions prove useless, and the woman sees that she is not succeeding, she will go so far as to consult the bones, and, if they so order, she will make an offering to her gods, gods of the father, gods of the mother, or possessing gods (Part VI), if she is a spirit-possessed woman, as the bones may

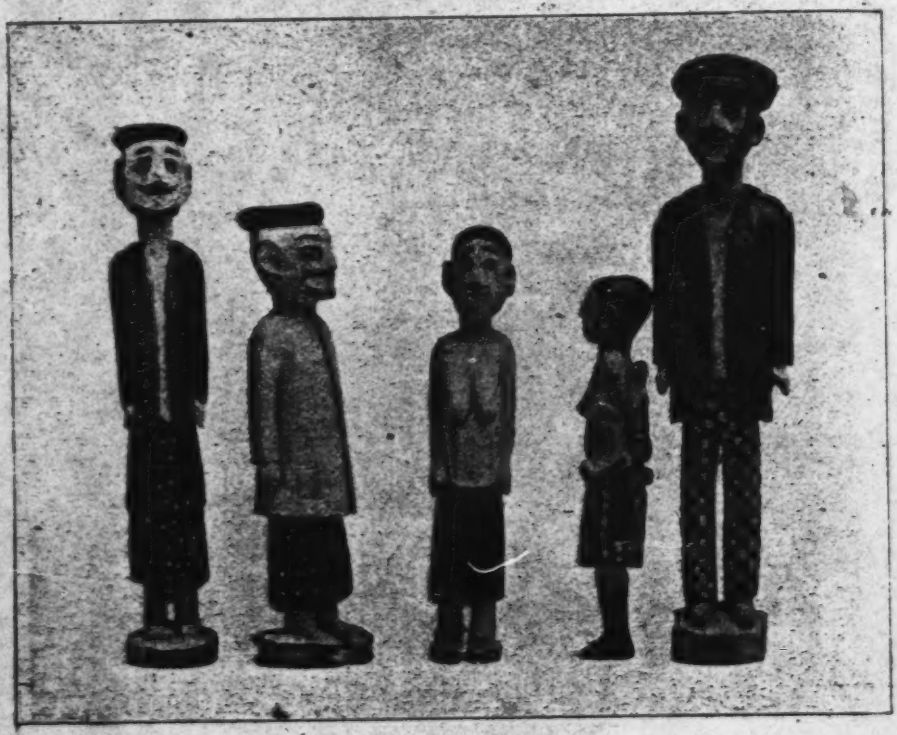
323

Result of the firing. *Phot. A. Borel.*

787 declare. People will say to her : "You manufacture pots and sell them and do not give anything to your gods : that will not do!" So she will offer a piece of clothing, a coin, etc., at the altar *(gandjelo)*.

323 (1) Meta, the Rikatla potteress has entirely given up the manufacture of pottery of
476 late years. All her pots cracked, because, she said, she was the only woman practising this art in the country. In her former home, everybody made pots and in this way the potteresses "strengthened each other (tiyisana)." Moreover when a pot was heard cracking in the furnace, somebody ran to the hut and collected a little of the dust on the floor and threw it into the other pots, and this prevented them from being spoiled. It was too far for Meta to run to her former home to get the dust—so she gave up her trade! The case of poor Meta is a good illustration of the collective character of industrial pursuits amongst primitive peoples.

322 through the ages. The specimen in the illustration[1] was bought
352 from a young man, a traveller, on the road; the bird's claws,
777 beads and other articles tied all round it, doubtless hunting trophies, are plainly to be seen. He had the advantage of literally



Thonga statuettes.
(One third of the natural size.)

resting on his laurels, and naively believed they would bring him good luck while sleeping.

532 The Thonga artist has even dared to portray the *human form*,
481 and the result of his audacity, however grotesque, is not without
322 originality, and even a certain characteristic style, which may be recognised in all their statuettes. More often they content themselves with carving a man's head, with his crown, on the top of their walking sticks. I here give[2] an illustration of Mankhelu's stick, which was a very old one, dating from 1850,

[1] [The Thonga pillow -- See p. 128, No. 8. -- Analyst]

[2] [p. 133]

"You see! Stones also grow!" Another Native geologist, who had heard the European story of creation, coming from the Coast, a country of sand and sand only, and visiting the Drakensberg Mountains near Shiluvane, was amazed by the enormous cliffs of the Mamotswiri and gave vent to the following reflection : "No wonder we have no stones in our sandy land. When God created the earth, he used them all to build these mountains!" 823

Fossils are rare in Thongaland, where sand covers almost the whole country. There is however in the southern part of the Maputju region an outcrop of cretaceous rock which belongs to the Gault and which contains ammonites, Nautillus etc. Natives call them *nsongo stones* and are very much afraid of them. They say that "these stones with ribs" can walk. They bring bad luck (singita). Should a child pick up one of these fossils and bring it into the village, he will fall ill ; he must therefore undergo a special treatment. 136 823 777

Crystal greatly pleases the Natives. It is rare in South Africa. When magicians can secure a white or a black crystal they generally wear it round their necks together with the claws, or teeth, of wild animals, or with their little skin bags which they use as amulets. For this reason I once had the good fortune to be able to exchange a crystal I had brought from Switzerland for one of these charms! 135 301

The *earth* (misaba) is also a great and important thing. First because it is identified with the people dwelling on it, with the clan. *Tiko*, the land, means both the soil and the people. Further than this, the earth is the chief (I. p. 382) ; hence many laws : e. g. the tusk of the elephant which fell on the earth when the beast was killed, belongs to the chief, etc. (p. 57). The most solemn oath is that which is taken with earth (ku funga u hahla hi misaba). Should a man be accused of stealing or of being a wizard, if he puts a little earth in his mouth, says *tsu*, and declares : "I do not know anything about it," those who care for his safety will look for a medicine-man to treat him : it is a *mondjo* (a magical method of divination. See Chapter III). The same thing is done when an oath has been taken by sucking a piece of iron. 823 695 787

A curious superstition regarding the earth is this : after moving from one country to another, you should for some days mix with 823

137 in the case of the Hibiscus genus. Its name is *Ntjhesi*; there
824 are the Ntjhesi of the hill (Hibiscus surratensis, etc.), the Ntjhensi
757 of the nyaka, another species found in Morakwen in the black
earth; and there is the *shitjhesinyana sha ntlhaba*, double dimin-
815 utive of ntjhesi, the Sida cordifolia, a pretty little Malvacea,
a near relative of the Hibiscus, very much used in treating
children's complaints, a panacea for babies, as it cures their
vomiting, headache, wounds and internal troubles!

137 I find the same correct connection established between two
824 Anonaceae shrubs, the Artabotrys brachypetala, called *Ntiti*, and
815 the Art. Monteiroae, called *Shintitane*, little Ntiti, of the same
genus, but a shrub of a very different appearance.

However there is, of course, no anatomical study at the base of this classification: so their ideas of genus are not always, scientifically speaking, correct. They call any parasite *Phakama*, whatever may be its form, and have a superstitious fear of them, especially of the larger ones, growing on other trees, such as the nkanye and nkuhlu: "Phakama dja singita!" (1)

137 *Nkushe* means sea-weed, either the true algae, as Lagarosiphon muscoides, or other plants growing in water and belonging to totally different families, such as Urticularia stellaris, found in the same locality. *Nkaka*, or *Nkakana*, is the little Cucumber already described (p. 14), whilst *Nkaka wa tjhobo* is a Convolvulvus (Ipomea cairica). The *Shirimbyati*, one of the names most employed, designates first the Helichrysum parviflorum, a yellow Composita which covers the sandy dunes, and blossoms during the winter; but *Shirimbyati sha tjhune*, the male one, is Gnaphalium stenophyllum, and *Shirimbyati sha mutju*, the one of the forest, an Indigofera belonging to the Leguminosae family; these three plants have in common small hard leaves: hence the same name is given to them, although they are by no means related botanically speaking. So shirimbyati corresponds to our word heath, which is applied to many forms of evergreen undergrowth.

777 (1) "The parasite stem *singita*," i. e. is of bad omen. They do not say *yila*, is
824 taboo, though some rules apply to it similar to those concerning the tree struck by
753 lightning. One does not warm oneself at its fire; its wood is not employed to cook food, for fear lest men should suffer from hydrocele.

136 birth to the big green moth with long tails, the Queen Moth. The
815 reason why butterflies, though plentiful in Thongaland, have so little attracted the attention of Natives is, no doubt, the fact that they do not in any way contribute to their food. I have told the story of a woman who tried to force a child to eat a butterfly. (I. p. 445.)

136 *Coleoptera.* The general term for Coleoptera is *Shifufununu*,
825 and it especially applies to the big Tenebrionidae (Psammodes Bertoloni), called *shifufununu sha paripari* (p. 68) and to the large
777 black Carabidae of the Anthia genus which abound on the roads in spring ; one of them, marked with small depressions on the elytra is, for that reason, called the small-pox shifufununu (sha nyedzane). Travelling once with a grown-up Thonga we saw a black Carabida which had four white spots on the back. It was the charming Eccoptoptera mutilloides. I saw him trace a circle round it in the sand saying : "To-day I shall eat to my heart's content!" — "Namunhla ndji ta shura!" — "What are you doing?" I said. — "Oh! This is the *Shurwa-shurwane*," he answered. "When you meet it it is a sign that you will have plenty to eat!" He was mistaken! The real shurwa-shurwane is the Mutilla, a kind of apterous wasp, which has also four white spots on its back, and the beetle we met was so similar to it that he mistook it for a Mutilla ; is it not called mutilloides, pseudo-mutilla? (1)

136 — The Copridæ are called *Gadlen* (dji-ma) and these strange
[753] dung-eaters, which are extremely abundant in the country, are thought to be under the command of the wizards who can introduce
825 them into your body to kill you. The pretty Cerambycidæ,
262 with their long horns, are the *Ñwahomurikotjo*, the ox of Rikotcho, or, according to a truer etymology, the ox with horns bent backwards (kotjeka). Children sing an incantation before them, clapping their hands (I, p. 68). Their big white larvae, the *Shipungwana*, dig channels in the stems of nkanye, nkuhlu, mphesa, etc., and are readily eaten as well as the *Shimhukuta*, the

(1) This custom reminds one of the action of Swiss children when they send the ladybird to heaven, to ask God to give them fine weather to-morrow, or of their saying that crushing a golden Carabus on the road will cause rain to fall. Certain Coleoptera are of good omen everywhere! Only, if in Europe they foretell fine weather, in Africa they announce a good meal. The difference is significant!

136 larva of a large Calandra which swarms in the stems of the palm
825 trees of the marsh (p. 4). The *Shitambela*, a big Buprestida
262 (Sternocera Orissa) is roasted by the shepherds and eaten after they have torn off its elytra.

136 *Hymenoptera. Wasps* are called *Mupfi* or *Mupfu* (mu-mi),
755 and are divided into four different classes : the *Mupfu* proper (Belonogaster), the *Tlatlanhongana*, the *Bamaandlopfu*, a grey species, and the *Mumpfundlopfu*, a large black species which burrows in the soil. When someone has been stung by a wasp, the others laugh at him. If he resents being made fun of, they say to him : "Be not angry ; we do this to help you." They are really trying to divert his attention from the pain in order to
136 comfort him. *Bees* are called *Nyoshi* (yin-tin) and are greatly
262 appreciated for their honey (p. 44). Natives know the males
815 (*djongwe*, dji-ma) the larvae *(shipungwa)*, which they eat with as much pleasure as the honey itself. They call the honeycombs *hahla* (dji-ma) or *shihlenga*, the wax *mumpfu* (mu-mi) and the
136 pollen brought by the bees, *nsindjo*. The curious *Mbonga* (yin-tin)
825 *Bee* is worth special mention, owing to the superstitions which are current regarding it, and the part it plays in certain rites (I. p. 390). This species, which does not sting, digs a narrow passage of two or three feet deep in the soil and excavates a hole of one or two feet broad where it builds its round nest. Natives say that nobody knows what the mbonga does with the earth which it digs out of the cavity in which it makes its nest. No heap of earth is ever seen in the vicinity. The hole is continued under the nest and has no end. It probably extends to subterranean pools where the insects go to drink, — as it is said that no one has ever seen a mbonga drinking from the lake or the well, as the other bees do. Moreover the entrance to a mbonga nest is invisible to the majority of people. It is only certain families who can see it and consequently dig out the precious honey (1). For all these reasons the mbonga is

777 (1) The Libombo family was one of those "which the mbonga loves" (randja). Elias who belongs to it told me that he once paid a visit to one of his neighbours who had just cleaned his village; he discovered a mbonga hole and said to his friend: "There is a mbonga nest in your village." But the man was unable to find it. Elias then dug as deep as his shoulders and found the nest all surrounded by "calabashes" full of honey. He says that when rain falls the little bees cover the entrance of

136 825 surrounded with a certain mystery, and this is no doubt why its honey is used in the manufacture of the *nyokwekulu*. Its scientific name is Trigona togoensis, var. Junodi (Friese).

136 262 454 787 Amongst the *Mollusca*, a great many are eaten : the *Mbatsana* (yin-tin) of the sea (bivalve shells), *Likatla* (li-tin) of the lakes, and the *Hwaru* (yi-tin), oysters of the Tembe shore. The land snails are called *Humba* (yi-tin) ; the big ones (Achatina Lamarkiana) are used as safes for the deposit of pounds sterling and are often buried in the huts ; hence the expression *Humba ya bupfundji*, shell of riches! The smaller ones, resembling our snails (Aerope caffra), are rarer and it is considered a bad omen to meet with them on the road. — "Where you go you will hear cries of mourning!" Their name is *Shikumbukwane*. The slugs are called *Holokompfa* (yin-tin) and the smaller snails, *Shihumbanyana*, diminutive of *humba*.

136 825 262 *Fish* all have names, but having never dwelt in the close vicinity of the sea, I have not learnt them. I know the *Mfungwe* (yi-tin). the fish whose mouth ends in a saw, the *Mangapfi* (dji-ma), the name of a kind of hawk given to the flying fish of Delagoa Bay, the *Nhempfane* (yi-tin) found in the fresh water ponds, the *Ntima* (yi-tin) the barbel, the black fish which must not be eaten by lovers before their marriage (I, p. 107).

136 *Amphibia*. *Ntlambya* (mu-mi) is the ordinary frog (Rana oxyrhynca) whose young are known and called *Shilungula* ; another black species is the *Rebya* (dji-ma) ; the tree-frogs are called *Shilungwalungwana* (Rappia marmorata and argus) ; the toad *Kele* (dji-ma), Bufo regularis ; the famous Breviceps mossambicus is *Shinana* (I. p. 87) the great warrior of the tales (p. 221).

136 825 *Reptilia*. There are many kinds of *Lizards*. The common kind found in the houses, under the verandas is the *Mponondjo* (mu-mi) (Mabuia striata), ; the Lygodactylus capensis, found on the hills, is the *Nkolombya* (mu-mi) ; the little Agama

777 the hole with their wings to prevent water from inundating the nest. When it lasts too long they quickly go down to close the entrance of the nest ; the water then leaks down the pipe which descends into the interior of the earth. He added : "If a man does not belong to a family which "knows" the mbonga and if he happens to find a nest he will meet with misfortune ; one of his relatives will die. The bees will bring him ill-luck (singita)."

825 *Shipyahla* (Ro.), *Mhiri* (yin-tin, Dj.) is the big, lazy, grey puff adder,
136 which creeps along the ground, and is one of the most venomous kinds, together with the *Mhamba* (yin-tin), a slender species, very swift and often found on trees. "When you meet a mhiri," say the Nkunas, "throw a little earth on it and you will soon see
[752] its brother!" Of course magicians have plenty of drugs to cure snake bites. For this purpose they use the head of the adder roasted and pulverised. *Shibatlankombe*, (Naja nigricollis), "the one which carves a spoon" is the name of a species which
[762] curves its neck till it looks like a spoon. The *Hhlaru* (yin-tin) is the boa. It is eaten. Another member of the Clapidae family is the *Likure*, a pretty greyish violet species (Causus Lichtensteinii).
[769] Amongst the harmless snakes are those little blue ones, *Shihundje* (Dendrophis subcarinatus), which are considered as emissaries of the ancestor spirits. I shall mention them again later on. The *Nsoma* (yin-tin), very common and harmless, is probably Dispholidus typus. Some small ones, not larger than worms, but hard and shining like metal, are called *Tumbi-tumbi*, because they hide (tumba) in the sand. One of them seems to be Xenocalamus bicolor.

825 There are also the legendary snakes of the Thongas. On the
777 Coast they speak of the *Buwumati*, which dwells in the lakes and is invisible. It is only heard crying "bu-wu-bu-wu" when rain is falling, and its voice is as loud as that of an antelope. If it shows itself to a traveller, it is a very bad sign. The story is told of a man who came back from consulting a bone-thrower. He saw the buwumati lying on the ground, its coils extending to a great distance, closing all the passages. He retraced his steps, but after three days he died. In the Transvaal, this dreadful snake is called *Shimhemhemhe*, the name being an imitation of its cry.
825 This superstition is perhaps of Pedi origin, but it has been accepted by the Nkunas. The shimhemhemhe dwells in certain dark woody ravines on the slopes of the Drakensberg mountains. If anyone imprudently penetrates there, the snake pursues him, creeping along the branches above, and bites him on the top of the head. A man met with it once on the way to Thabina; he saw it on the road, its head raised, a shining head of two colours. There

circulation (p. 63-76). I shall have to content myself with giving the names of some Mammalia and relating some superstitions concerning them. 136

Edentata : two kinds are known, the *Mpandjana* (yin-tin), the ant-bear, which is covered with hair, and the *Kwara* (dji-ma) which has scales. The only Cetacea known is the *Nkomu* (yin-tin), the whale.

Solipedes : *Mangwa* (yin-tin) means zebra, and this term is sometimes applied to horses ; this latter animal is called *Hanshi* (dji-ma), evidently a corruption of the English word. *Mbongolo* (yin-tin), donkey. *Mula* or *Mewula*, mule.

Pachyderma : *Ngulube* (yin-tin), wild boar and also, by extension, domesticated pig. *Mpfubu* (yin-tin), hippopotamus.

Ruminantia : *Homu* (yin-tin), ox. *Nyari* (yin-tin), buffalo. *Hamba* (yin-tin, Ro.), *Nyimpfu* (yin-tin, Dj.), sheep. *Mbuti* (yin-tin), goat. *Mhalamhala* (yin-tin), sable antelope, Hippotragus niger. *Mhala* (yin-tin) (Zulu impala). *Mhumti* (yin-tin), duiker *Hongonyi* (yin-tin), gnu. *Mangulwe* (mu-ba). *Mhetlwa* (yin-tin), water buck. *Nhlangu* (yin-tin), reed buck. *Mhofu* (yin-tin), eland, *Nhutlwa* (yin-tin), giraffe, etc.

Proboscidea : *Ndlopfu* (yin-tin), elephant.

Rodentia : *Mpfundla* (mu-mi), hare, *Nhlolo* (yin-tin), rabbit. *Khondlo* (dj -ma), mouse. *Vondo* (dj -ma), *Phephe* (dj-ma), *Ngole* (yin-tin), etc.

Insectivora : *Shitlulandlela*, mole, lit. the one which crosses the road ; it is a bad omen for a mole to cross your path. *Tjukunyana*, a brownish mole which digs its burrows just below the surface of the ground. Hence the fact that a bracelet made of its skin is employed as medicine against the Filaria, a parasite which makes its way under the skin! 136 777 825 755

Carnivora : *Nsimba* (yin-tin), civet cat. *Shipakana*, cat. *Mbyana* (yin-tin), dog. *Mhisi* (yin-tin), hyena. *Hlolwa*, *Nhlati* (mu-ba), fox. *Yingwe* (yin-tin), leopard. *Ndjau* (Ro.), *nghala* (Dj.), lion, etc. 136

Chiroptera : *Tangadana* (dji-ma, Ro.), *Mangadyana*, (mu-ba. Dj.), bat.

Primates : *Mfene* (yin-tin), baboon. *Habu* (yin-tin), monkey.

themselves so far removed from the animal world as is the case amongst more civilised races. 826

Another point on which Thongas see a resemblance between man and the animal is this : they believe that both possess the *nuru* (I. p. 478 ; II, p. 77-80). It is true that the nuru is only found in some animals : the eland, the ndakazi antelope, the elephant, the hippopotamus, etc. We shall have to consider this superstition again when dealing with Thonga Animism. 774

Is this idea of identity between man and the animal pushed so far as a belief that men can transform themselves into animals, and vice-versa? It is certain that in tales men are often changed into hyenas, lions, etc. (See Dukuli, *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 283 and the story of the Ogre Ziniko (p. 256).) But these are purely fictitious. The theory is by no means generally accepted. In the ordinary course of life such transformations would not be considered possible. But they are certainly thoroughly believed in in the domain of magic. Magicians claim that they can fly through the air, with their axes, transform themselves into the lightning bird and so kill their enemy. But it is the wizards (baloyi) who are considered to possess this power par excellence, especially the faculty of changing human beings into beasts to make them work on their behalf. These ideas will be studied in Chapter III. 825 791

I have already mentioned the bird which "stops travellers" (I. p. 339) ; amongst Mammalia a certain Antelope is the object of the same superstitious fear. This is the little red *magulwe* (or *shipene*) whose astragalus bone is employed in divination under the name of malumbi (See Part VI. Letter D). — "When it crosses the road, in front of a travelling party," says Mankhelu, "the leader of the company stops his comrades, goes forward, sits down alone at the spot where the antelope passed, and pours his magical powder into the footprints of the animal. Then he shouts to his companions to come and follow him. Having walked for some time, he takes off all his clothing, and lies down quite naked, as if he were dead. The others continue their march forward. After a while, he jumps to his feet and, making a circuit through the bush, outruns them, without being noticed, and sits down on the road, further on. 825 777

825 They come up to him and wonder how he got there. By this rite
777 he has prevented the misfortune which the antelope would have caused to the travellers."

B. CONCEPTIONS REGARDING MAN.

I. *The origin of man.*

773 While the Thonga mind is very little puzzled by the question of the creation of heaven and earth, the origin of man preoccupies it more deeply. I must now enter into some details as to the story of human origin which has been already mentioned (I. p. 21). It contains two parts : the creation of man and the cause of death.

1) The creation of man.

The first human beings came out of the *lihlanga*, the reed, as some say, or the *nhlanga*, the marsh of reeds, according to others. These two versions seem to answer to two different conceptions. The first is that one man and one woman suddenly came out of one reed, which exploded (baleka), and there they were! According to the second, men of different tribes emerged from a marsh of reeds, each tribe already having its peculiar costume, implements and customs. So when you ask about the origin of the iron hoe amongst the Vendas, who possessed it before the Thongas, you will be told : "The Vendas emerged from the marsh of reeds holding them" (1).

The first man and woman are called in the Northern clans

177 (1) I believe the first version to be the true Thonga one. It may be that the idea that all races came out of the marsh of reeds is an alteration of the primitive conception under Nyai influence. The Ba-Nyai say that all men emerged from a big hole, the hole of Myali or Nwari, in the earth, at a time when stones and rocks were still so soft that foot-prints remained marked on them. It has been supposed that the myth of the reed is simply an allusion to a physiological phenomenon, but I do not believe this.

787 see, why divination plays such an important part in their life.
769 It is of the utmost importance to know what their gods think
776 and do, as the very existence of the village, and of the clan, and the welfare of every member of the clan depends on them. Is not Lukwembo, Divinity "the power of killing or of making alive, of enriching or of making poor?" Natives believe firmly in these two opposite actions of their gods. They are the masters of everything : earth, fields, trees, rain, men, children, even of baloyi, wizards! They have full control over all these objects or persons.

769 The gods can *bless* : if the trees bear plenty of fruit, it is because
776 they have made it grow (I. p. 414) ; if the crops are plentiful, it is because they forced wizards to increase them, or hindered them
777 from spoiling them (I. p. 396) ; if you come across a pot of palm wine, it is your god who has sent you that windfall (p. 44). When Mboza escaped from the Morakwen battle, one of his relatives exclaimed on his return home : "The gods of Makaneta have still been with you!" (Psikwembu psa ka Makaneta psa ha ku yimelele.) Often when a man has narrowly escaped drowning, or spraining his ankle on a stump which has caught his foot, he will say : "The gods have saved me."

769 But they can also *curse*, and bring untold misfortune on their
776 descendants. If the rain fails, it is owing to their anger ; if a tree
789 falls on you, they have directed its fall ; if a crocodile bites you, the
753 gods have sent it ; if your child has fever and is delirious, they are in him, tormenting his soul ; if your wife is sterile, they have prevented her from childbearing ; perhaps the gods of your mother have done this, because you had not given your maternal uncle the *tjhumba* part of the lobolo, which he has the right to claim (I. p. 267) ; in fact any disease, any calamity may come from them. There are, of course, other sources of misfortune : the baloyi, for instance, or Heaven, and the bones will show who has caused the mischief ; but the ancestor-gods are certainly the most powerful spiritual agency acting on man's life. Hence the necessity of propitiating them by prayers and sacrifices.

No special use is made of the *bones* of the victim, except, as we shall see later, in offerings on behalf of those possessed. The only part kept is the *astragalus*, or the *psirungulo* just described, which are tied to the person on whose behalf the sacrifice has been made, probably to insure for him a permanent blessing from the gods.

It must be observed that the sacrificial ritual, as well as the medical art, lays great stress on the *sex* of the offerings. As a rule, there must be opposition between the sex of the victim and that of the person for whom, or to whom, the sacrifice is made. A woman is prayed for by means of a he-goat or a cock, and a man by a she-goat or a hen.

What is the reason of this rule? — "Psi yaka muti," says my informant. "It builds up the village." As a village can only grow and multiply by the union of the male and the female element, so in order to succeed in any pursuit it is necessary to unite both sexes. This principle is universally applied : when a girl is ill, a boy will bring her medicine, and vice-versa. The rule is also followed in another case. It may be that a mhamba has been wrongly performed and threatens to bring misfortune instead of appeasing the gods. This mhamba must consequently be "quenched, timula" "so that it may keep quiet and cool down, because it might cause annoyance and overcome them" (Mboza). This will be done by offering a mhamba of the opposite sex, which will correct the first. So if a female nkanye twig has been employed in the funeral ceremony, when the ritual ought to have been performed with a twig taken from a male stem, the ceremony will be repeated with a male twig in order to quench the first mhamba.

The last observation to be made about the gifts presented to the ancestor-gods is that the *psirungulo*, viz. the part of the victim which is tied to the person for whose sake it has been sacrificed, must be attached to the left part of the body if this person belongs to the female, to the right if to the male sex ; moreover in the sacrifices offered to maternal gods, the attachment is always done on the left side, whatever may be the sex of the person. Why is this? Because the left side belongs to the woman, the right to the man. We have seen that this is the case in the hut (I. p. 187).